

# IVY LEAVES

SPRING  
1965



# IVY LEAVES

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**Student Staff:**

Editor—Carol Gibson

Co-Editor—Tissie Blessing

Associate Editor—Dan Matthews

Business Manager—Randy Chambers

Assistant Business Manager—Sandra Kyle

Art Editor—Mike Miller

**Faculty Staff:**

Faye P. Cowan, R. S. Moore, Marietta McCown, E. C. Simpson,  
W. F. West, Jr., Jerome D. Wilson

**Advisor:**

Miss Marietta McCown

**Cover:**

When IVY LEAVES was a new publication in the spring of 1964, students were asked to submit suggestions for an appropriate title. Ellen Tillotson offered a most apropos title. Her suggestion took hold in the minds of the students of Anderson College. In keeping with this established title, we again dub this semester's literary magazine, IVY LEAVES. Mike Miller is the artist.

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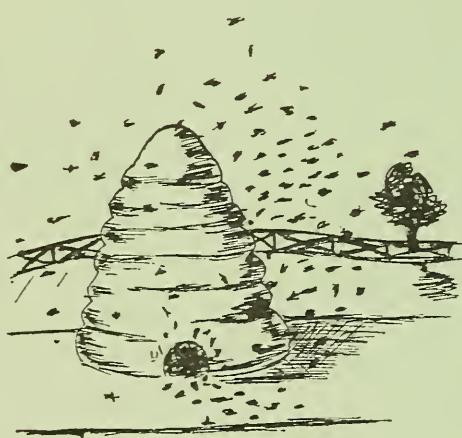
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## **Editorial**

Selections in IVY LEAVES are composed by members of the Anderson College Community.

This is the second publication of the IVY LEAVES this year. We should like to commend the Anderson College students for their enthusiasm, which made our fall edition a success.

We wish to express our appreciation to those contributors who, through their interest, have made this publication possible.



DRAWINGS BY  
MIKE MILLER

## Search For Perfection

The dark waves come rolling harshly into shore. The heavy water pounds the sand to and fro as if she were only some scornful mother punishing her naughty children. Searching, seeking, and never finding, the mighty billows recede and gaining more power and strength rush in again to renew the everlasting battle with the shore. Standing alone at the water's edge is one so small as not to cast a shadow. Terror and hatred can be read into those dark unloving eyes.

To be brave and strong like those waves! Instead, I stand at the water's edge smelling the salty brine and never being quite able to grasp life. So close, and yet never closer than the smell! Always reaching but afraid to grasp. Wanting to be loved but never loving. Taking but never giving. Like the mighty ocean, coming so close but always withdrawing, smothered by fear.

The night is cold. A brisk wind blows softly over the dunes. It too, seems to be searching. But never recoiling, the wind keeps pushing ahead, striving for something that doesn't exist, taking with it the sand and chaff discarded by man. Darkness seeps from the waters and covers the earth with a heavy blanket.

Terror rises in my throat and fear clutches my heart as I realize, THIS is my life. The winds, the waves, the darkness. To reach for the impossible—always pushing—always wanting—but afraid of failing. To reach for the stars and find that for me the stars do not exist. Perfection exists only here amid God's elements. In man there is no perfection. Welcoming the chilling warmth of the heavy dark water, I know my search for perfection is ended. No longer alone, lost, or cold!

The beach is quiet. Not a sound is heard but the mighty roar of the ocean. The dark waves continue to pound where no one remains to cast a shadow.

LYNDA WATKINS

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## The Dreamer

You might say I'm neurotic,  
Because I love to dream  
To envision life exotic  
And as I the supreme;  
To escape my earthly life,  
And live in my fantasy;  
To forget all my strife,  
And be what I want to be.  
But is this all so odd  
That I should want to flee?  
This giant mass of probability  
To extreme possibility.

DAVE CATANZARO

## Charlie Jones, Salesman

Charlie Jones had been a book salesman for Ajax Book Company for many years, and it was said that he could sell a book to anyone he called on. One day Charlie took the bus to Middleton to find some new subscribers for his company. As he got off the bus and started towards the general store, he noticed that all the people he saw on the street looked simple. "Oh! What a fortune I'll reap here," he said to himself.

When Charlie reached the general store, he went inside and bought a bottle of soda pop. The store was operated by a huge fat man dressed in overalls and a dirt-stained white apron, with a pencil between his wire frame glasses and grey hair. "What a sucker," thought Charlie. "I'll sell this old bear a set of books in record time," he said.

"Sir," said Charlie, "I have with me today the most fabulous set of books ever printed in the whole wide world."

"Do you know?" said the storekeeper.

"Yes, I do, and I'm going to let you look at them free of charge. Now I know the first thing you are going to say is that you are not interested in subscribing to any book. But my dear sir, once you see how much information is crammed into every book of this set you will not be able to live without them," cried Charlie.

"But, mister I—"

"My friend," interrupted Charlie, "my books contain over ten thousand illustrated pictures beautifully designed. These books are usually sold for \$30.00 a set, but now they are only \$15.00. Just think of the bargain you will be getting if you order a set today," said Charlie.

"Mister, I really don't believe I could use any because I—"

"I know," said Charlie, "you can't afford the \$15.00 now, but we can work out time payments for you. You can pay as little as \$3.00 a month."

The old man began to get a disgusted look on his fat face while Charlie did nothing but smile and beat his thin jaws. "There are plenty of books printed on the finest white paper, and it takes a year to print twelve sets. They are recommended by the American Book Club and every other leading book organization in the world. You can get these in different colored covers, blue and white, red and white, green and white, and our newest shades, orange and red. They look positively beautiful in any living room, den, or study. Your wife, if you are married, would love to show these books to her friends. You are married, I presume?" asked Charlie.

"Yes!" answered the storekeeper.

"Well, then you do not have any reason for not buying a set of these marvelous books, do you?" asked Charlie.

"Yep, I sure do," replied the storekeeper. "I can't read!"

"WHAT!" cried Charlie in a frightful voice.

"That's right," said the storekeeper, "the only way I know what things are is the way they are made or by what color they are."

"Heaven forbid," declared Charlie and began to walk slowly out of the store.

"Hold on a second," shouted the storekeeper. "You ain't paid for your bottle of soda pop yet."

DON L. ALBERTSON

## What So Proudly We Hailed

The shrill fanfare of the trumpets pierces the air like a sword. The spectators in the stands become alert and watch with eagerness. All is quiet except the cadence of the drums as the band moves onto the field.

Presently the band formation is completed. Each member of the unit is at attention. There is a moment of quiet and the conductor raises his arms for the downbeat.

Out of the silence pervades a pianissimo drum roll. The color guard, in perfect precision, marches forward. All the while the dynamics are increasing to a tremendous fortissimo. The climax is reached—"Old Glory" waves high in the sky.

Spectators arise. Hats are placed over men's hearts. Military salutes are given. Signs of admiration and pride are illustrated throughout the stadium.

The band, hearing the final tone of the drum roll, burst forth into music. The full effect of the moment is realized and out of the stands comes, "Oh, say can you see, By the dawn's early light. What so proudly we hailed . . . ."

DARLENE ADDINGTON

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## An Opinion Of Home And Abroad

Most men rise out of the dust,  
Most men fall from lack of trust,  
Today's goals are wealth and lust,  
For these ambitions our spirits thrust.

Black men say that life is tough,  
White men say you have enough,  
Black man I admit your goal is rough,  
But white men's had enough of this stuff.

Our foreign affairs are not much better,  
We watch our step to the letter,  
Everyone changes their mind like the weather,  
Maybe they should all get together.

In the states law and order has gone,  
And we speak abroad with a very harsh tone,  
Our destination is still unknown,  
Foreseen only by the eternal, the everlasting throne.

JIM CLARK

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## Happiness

To define happiness as joy, laughter, pleasure, satisfaction, or success could well be done. But sadness can be found where there is joy, a frown where there is laughter, vexation where there is pleasure, discontent where there is satisfaction, and failure where there is success. A pessimist might say this is true and good, but let us not view life or the pessimist. There can even be joy in sadness, laughter in frowns, pleasure in vexation, satisfaction in discontent, and success in failure. The optimist might well agree here, but let us not be persuaded by optimism.

True happiness is peace with self.

RONNIE O'KELLEY

## A Dreamer's Viewpoint

The stars, drowning hopelessly in black,  
Swirled in the heavens above my head.  
Such is a dream, my heart replied,  
A star is a soul that is not quite dead.

A floundering, faltering, flickering thing  
That wavers, then from a tiny spark  
Of reality may take fire and become  
An abstract light to relieve the dark.

The grossness of life is humanity's dark,  
As the dark of night is heaven's sting,  
But life goes on, yea, weak and weary,  
So dreams, like stars, must be infinite things.

SANDRA KYTLE

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## The Presence of God

Softly you come to me with time  
And, yet, outside of time—  
You come into my presence  
And give me purpose, hope, and  
make me understand myself.

And then you go away  
Like a cake of ice on a hot July day.  
You disappear and leave no trace behind  
Except the knowledge of your presence lately known.

Some call you mystery;  
Others call you conscience;  
Still others say you are eternal being;  
I call you God.

RONNIE KING

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## A Man Thinks No Evil?

Come away with me to the fairyland of the do-gooders and the decent, the pillars of the collapsing community. Who are they? What really are they?

I address this sickly dribble of penmanship to the so-stated lucky two-legged beings of this contest who have elbowed their way to the summit and now have to smash heads to stay there. They cry ha-ha to their defeated competitors, and then drown their ulcers with a by-product of a moving four-legged beast. I sit back and laugh and watch them create their hell. It used to be influence; now it's pull. It used to be respect; now it's money.

"The strong shall inherit the earth"—This seems to be the slogan of the well-informed, well-educated, couth, gentlemen of today.

Oh, you filthy mongrels, tearing at the flesh of humanity, infecting the sore of indecency and crime. How I would like to ram a needle into the fester and show the world exactly what you are and evermore shall be!

LANE KOWALSKI

## Fruit's Fruit (Isn't It?)

On Route 22, just off Main, is a small curb market. Anyone passing on Main can see a kingly tree stretching its arms over the shelter to touch a smaller image of itself on the other side. On sunny days, a closer glance will bring into view a figure of an old man sitting with his chair leaning against the trunk of the larger tree.

It was on such a day, I stopped to buy a cool drink. There on a counter was a small fruit basket of tempting plums; so I bit into one. It was sweet and juicy. I bought them and asked if he had anymore, for I knew I could not resist eating on the way home.

The old man explained that he had only one basket left, but it was for a friend who was responsible for those plums.

"You see that tree out there?" he pointed with his thumb toward his resting place. "It would be a wood pile by now if it weren't for Jake."

He must have noticed my interest because he motioned toward the spare straw-bottom chair and took out a worn pipe.

"You see, I opened this place about fifteen years ago. I had intended to raise my own fruit, but I knew I would have to plant only a few trees each year until my business began to show enough profit to plant more. So I bought an apple tree and planted it near the market to allow room for my future trees."

"I loved that tree and petted it so much, my neighbors called it 'Homer's Baby.' When I noticed a bloom on its young arms one morning, I was so happy, I strutted like an expectant grandfather. Each day I counted the new blooms. By the middle of spring the sapling was one big mass of blooms.

After the blooms began to fall, I watched for a sign of fruit but none came. I didn't let this worry me much since I heard that a tree doesn't always bear the first year of blooms.

The next year the tree bore blooms so big and so many, I could hardly wait for summer to see those big apples, but none came.

This went on for three years. My hopes for a big orchard vanished.

The fourth year the plentiful blooms failed to excite me. The tree seemed to try to get my attention by stretching itself toward the sky and giving of its best fragrance from its lavender blossoms. I turned my back to the show-off."

Mack, who lives on the big hill yonder, noticed its loaded limbs. "My, you'll have a bumper crop this year," he said with his usual superior air as he turned to the counter. "Give me a box of Sweenies pepper."

"I don't carry that brand, but I have another just as good."

"If you don't carry the best, why do you try to sell anything? I'll just go where I can get what I want." He stopped as he passed the tree again. "Save me an apple from that tree."

"The tree won't bear fruit," I tried to apologize.

"Don't bear, uh," he frowned at its branches. "Homer, this is no apple tree, see them leaves. I'd chop this thing down today and carry it back to whoever sold it to you." And with that he was off.

I began to think, Why do I keep a worthless tree? I wanted an orchard; but what do I get? A tree that makes fun of me with its hopeless flowers. I resolved to cut it down and plant flowers where it stood.

The next day, Jake (from the valley) popped his head around the corner. "Morning, Homer," he smiled, showing all 32 teeth. "Just dropped by to pick up a few things." He went about gathering up a few odds and ends. "This the only kind soap you got? Doesn't matter, soap's soap. Noticed your tree blooming. Mighty pretty, mighty pretty."

"I was thinking about chopping it down, Jake," I broke in. "It's no good; it doesn't bear fruit."

"You can buy fruit anywhere; but you'll have to go a mighty long way to find a tree as pretty as that. If it weren't so big, I'd offer to buy it myself, since you have no use for it."

After Jake left, I didn't know what to do. I sat near the tree till the sun began to sink. One of the limbs kept swinging with the breeze and hitting me on the chin. This annoyed me, but then I caught the sweet fragrant message it sent. "Jake was right," I startled myself with the sound of my own voice and looked around to see if anyone heard me.

Early next morning I rode to town and ordered the same type tree as before, so I would have a pair on each side of the stand.

Three years later the young tree began to outbloom its elder. To my surprise, fruitbuds appeared that spring. I was so confused, I called a friend of mine who had an orchard and asked him why this tree finally decided to bear. He explained that sometimes trees needed a companion "especially if one happens to bear only male blooms. Besides," he went on, "you don't have an apple tree but an apple plum."

The old man shook out his pipe on the side of his chair and walked over to another basket and offered me a grape. "I'm sending this last basket of plums to Jake. I send him the best batch every summer."

I bit the grape and nearly swallowed the sides of my mouth. "These grapes-are s-sour."

"Oh, them. They're for Mack," he chuckled.

DORIS BRADEBERRY

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## Listen

Listen, listen!  
Listen with care,  
For this of which I speak is very rare.  
Ah, listen now, don't wait!  
Listen, listen!  
Listen now!  
  
This world is so full of noise  
That you may never again have  
A chance to be filled with the joys  
Of such a melody--  
Listen! Listen!  
Do you hear?  
Do you hear--the silence!

PEGGY BROCK

## Why

Oh, why, oh, why can't I do  
What I know is right?  
Why can't I do the things  
That would guard my future?  
Why can't I overcome this  
Feeling down inside  
That overflows my sense  
And reveals my foolish pride.  
Why can't I take my own advice  
And complete my task each day?  
Why can't I live for now  
And not for yesterday?  
Why can't I accept the truth  
And hope for a better sight?  
Why can't I seek the day  
Instead of hiding in the night?  
Why can't I conquer these  
And rest my weary soul?  
Is it because I lack the faith  
A purpose for the goal?

NOLAN LANCASTER

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## Time

There are sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes make up an hour, twenty-four hours constitute a day. Seven days form a week, fifty-two weeks mold a year and at the end of one hundred years a century moves into oblivion. What is time, where does it originate, where does it terminate? It is not material, it is not visible, you can only observe the alterations it leaves as it continues to move rapidly along. You cannot grasp it, nor can you stop. It does not cease with the stop of a watch or the destroying of a calendar. It is mystifying, terrifying and yet simplified. An infant cries, a young man laughs, an old man groans. His stay was short and full of dreams. He made plans but they were never executed. Time crept by as silent as the night moves in and out again. Death records another on its tally sheet. Does life stimulate time, does death terminate it? Who knows, only "TIME" will tell.

GLENN H. THOMASON

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## "Life's Road"

When a man drives  
A car down the road  
He stays in one lane;  
But when he steers himself  
Down the road of life,  
He finds that to be safe,  
He must choose neither the  
Left nor the right lane,  
But make his way  
By traveling between the two.

PEGGY BROCK

## The Story Of A Letter

It was a cold, dreary day in a small mountain hut. The noises of the city were so distant that they made no sound to the couple dwelling within this remote house. The winds came rustling through the tree tops to howl around the four corners of the small hut. Only the soft crackling of the logs in the fireplace broke the stillness which seemed to engulf the two people who sat alone.

At last, the silence in the room was broken by the shuffling of feet and the sound of a chair being pushed aside. The little lady had risen and was moving slowly toward a table in the corner. Taking paper and pencil from it, she resumed her former position and began to write. For what seemed an eternity to her companion, she wrote. Although he was busy mending a shoe, he became curious about the contents of the letter. However, he said not a word.

Finally, the letter was completed. The same sounds of shuffling feet and moving chair were heard again; this time, paper and pencil were replaced on the table. That having been done, the little lady, with a gleam in her eye, walked out of the house and put the letter in the mail box.

Sometime later, the rural carrier took the letter to a small country store in the corner of which was a sub-post office. Finally, the letter reached its destination. Eager little hands took it from the mail box; eager little feet hurried it into the house; an eager little voice announced, "Letter from Granny!"

It had been several weeks since the last letter had come from the mother and father up in the mountains. Happily, the daughter tore open the envelope and read. Suddenly, she made a gleeful sound signifying her joy at the news.

Meanwhile, in the small hut where the letter originated, the old gentleman questioned his wife about the letter. With twinkling eyes she said, "Oh, I wrote the children to come on up; I told 'em our first government check had come, and we could all celebrate!"

ANN HOLLIDAY

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## Dream World

As I lie dreaming in the night  
In a world of strange delight;  
I perceive but distantly,  
The things obnoxious unto me.

In my world of deep repose,  
I there seek my mind to close  
To all the things that in this life  
Are filled with horror, shame, and strife.

My dream world is a pretty sphere  
In no way fraught with snarl or leer;  
But upon waking I find I must  
Play once again by rules unjust.

ANNA MARR

## The Voyage

A very slight breeze, warm and sweet with the scent of jasmine is blowing out of the west and the sun's rays are just beginning to turn the eastern sky a beautiful shade of pink; the world is quiet but for the music of a few early-rising songbirds. Everything seems perfect at four-thirty on a morning like this.

That's the way it was at the harbor this morning. Today the four of us, Sam Snead, his brother Bill, Tom Shore and I were to leave for San Salvador in the Bahamas, and here I sit at my desk going over a contract for one of my clients. Sometimes I sure do consider telling a client "No!!" I would have given anything to have gone with them, but this contract could mean \$150,000 to Mr. Fairbanks and his company.

Boy, old Sam sure does have a beautiful sloop there. Forty feet of the grandest little boat on the seven seas. Those three guys are probably having the time of their lives right now.

They took the sloop out of Miami Bay about five-thirty this morning. By now they are probably out of sight of any land enjoying sailing the blue sea with a freedom not known to many men.

Hum-m! A few clouds beginning to form. Hope the weather doesn't get bad. I'd really give anything, even a few days of life itself, to be with those three today. Well, better get back to work on this thing.

I've been working on this contract for about three hours. Guess I can take a break and have some lunch.

Sure would like to be on that sloop.

It's started raining. Weather's probably great out where those lucky sailors are.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Bill, get that top sail down or this wind will rip us to pieces. Man, it sure didn't look like there would be a storm when we left this morning. Those lightning flashes sure do give the sea an eerie look. Listen to that thunder, I've never heard anything like it."

"Hey, Sam, do you think this tub of yours will hold together?"

"Yea, Tom, I think it will. Anyway, I sure hope so. Is everything tied down now?"

"Yea. We had better get the rest of the sails down or this thing's liable to swamp on up. Those waves must be reaching twenty-five feet now. Noise is deafening."

"Hey, do you hear that roar?"

"Yea, what is it? There was a flash of lightning."

"Look!! off our port bow--what is it? Sam, it's a tidal wave!! Swing this thing around to cut it or we'll swamp. Hurry, that thing must be a hundred feet high."

"Sam! Hurry!! We're not going to make it!!"

FRED HERRING

## Motivation?

### NATURAL SCIENCE

**Teacher:**

Wheel and axle, cold and heat;  
Experimental discovery, accidental find --  
Sitting passively, each in his seat,  
Not in the least to learning inclined --

**Pupils:**

"When do we eat?"

### MATHEMATICS

**Teacher:**

Roman numerals, Arabic figures, abacus,  
All methods of enumeration;  
Binomial theorem, and the one by Pythagoras,  
To make mathematicians for our nation.

**Pupils:**

"What good'll this ever do us?"

### SOCIAL SCIENCE

**Teacher:**

Debtors' prisons, slums, inveterate hate,  
Disarmament, peace leagues again;  
Brotherhood of Man still must await  
The foibles and follies of bungling man.

**Pupils:**

"Kid, what a date!"

### HISTORY

**Teacher:**

Persia, Greece, Egypt, Rome;  
Cyrus, Alexander, Pharoah, Caesar;  
Nations and men, ideas, and tomes  
That contain in their pages the earth's vast treasures.

**Pupils:**

"When do we go home?"

### GRAMMAR

**Teacher:**

The parts of speech—eight are enough,  
Nouns, through verbs, and to interjections;  
Verbals—diagraming—pretty rough,  
Required to make correct, communications.

**Pupils:**

"Do we HAVE to get this stuff?"

### LITERATURE

**Teacher:**

Beowulf, Spenser, Shakespeare came,  
Others follow galore;  
Milton, Wordsworth, Longfellow the same,  
With messages men need sore.

**Pupils:**

"We'll be late for the game!"

R. S. MOORE

# THE REVOLUTIONARY

## A Fantasy

By ELIZABETH B. TISDALE

CHARACTERS: Bar Abbas, a notorious insurrectionist  
Dysmas and Gestas, his fellow insurgents  
Longinus, a Roman centurion

(The *Acts of Pilate*, a New Testament Apocryphal book, names the characters thus.)

TIME: Shortly before the ninth hour of the night (3 a.m.) on Nisan 14 (Friday of the Feast of Passover), A.D. 33

PLACE: A Jerusalem prison room, dark except for a ray of moonlight shining through the one high window to silhouette three prisoners in chains, asleep on mats in the far corner.

At the beginning of the play there is the sound of a cock crowing twice in the distance.

Dysmas: Wake up! Did you not hear the cock crow twice?  
(Points to himself and Gestas on the next mat as he imitates the two crows)  
It sounded as if he spoke, "Crucify him, too! crucify him, too!"  
There was no third crow, yet there are three of us. Perhaps an omen: twice for two of us.

Bar Abbas: What about me?  
Condemned, will they not crucify me, too?

Gestas: Silence! I'd rather dream I am to live than waking, find I am to die. My heart pounds out with every beat, "Crucify! Crucify!" (Pounds chest with right hand, simulating heart beat as he imitates it twice)

Dysmas: Come, get up! It is not long we have to taste of life with all its joys and griefs, its hell 'n heaven, its twists and turns of fate. Today we're here; tomorrow gone. Who knows what this sunrise may usher in for us?

Bar Abbas: Or what the day's sunset may usher out. I'd like to cheat Pilate of our necks and have another chance to get at his. Would that my foiled insurrection against the cursed Romans might bear fruit and that they all might be like the centurion I stabbed that day Pilate became procurator.

Gestas: Bold talk, Bar Abbas, "son of the father," though no rabbi would own you as his son! Are you incited by patriot traditions of the fathers to restore Israel the kingdom in our day—or is it love of power? Jeshua, are you the namesake of the "saviour" who felled the walls of Jericho and gave our fathers Canaan, now ruled over by Roman law or are you money-mad? (Attempts to attack Gestas but is prevented by heavy clanging chains)

Bar Abbas: Who are you to mock me, you self-appointed assassin in the revolt I led against Pontius Pilate? What's that noise?

(The grating sound of a large bolt moving on the outside of the door is heard. A Roman centurion opens the creaking door, permitting light to shine in momentarily. The prisoners eagerly step, dragging their chains, toward the light before the door is closed and bolted again.)

Longinus: Back, swine! Plotting seditions still? (Draws sword)  
I am detailed to guard this prison and guarantee you not cheat us of your necks. I'd like to be on hand this afternoon to crucify

you three on the round skull of yon Golgotha's hill. Since I have been with Roman legions in Jerusalem, I haven't found a one of you who'd not rebel, stand your ground, nor fight till your last breath. I am fed up with it. If I could find just one peaceful Jew to change my mind—

Bar Abbas: You'll not find one! We've vowed to free Judea from Roman heel, to crush—not to be crushed! (Belligerently)

Longinus: The most peaceable one of you I have seen, just now patrolling Pilate's judgment hall. They accused the Nazarene of crime—subverting Palestine from Roman rule, and claiming to be the king of the Jews. I marvelled; he held his temper, didn't argue, nor accuse. They say he did the same when your Sanhedrin condemned him for blasphemy—calling himself the son of his father, God.

Gestas: (sarcastically) Jeshua Bar Abba, son of a father, you should meet Jeshua, son of his father, God. Perhaps you'd find you have more in common than your names.

Bar Abbas: If I were that Jeshua, I'd fight back! (Clenches fists at Gestas)

Longinus: I'm sure you would! Pilate's sent him to Herod to avoid a decision which would cost him his job. The priests are determined to get him out of the way. His teaching upsets their traditions revolutionarily. They'd rather kill him than lose everything. I guess man would dare kill God for his own gain! I'll wager before they're through, he'll fight back.

Dysmas: Once I heard him tell of his kingdom of peace with God and man. We've tried to restore the kingdom to Israel. Where's it got us?

Bar Abbas: Weakling! I might have guessed it that time you winced as you plunged the dagger in. (His lunge at Dysmas is foiled by his dragging chains)

Longinus: Enough! Go back to sleep, if you can rest your last day in this world. (The prisoners peer longingly toward the light as the centurion reopens door, closes and bolts it. All stare at closed door.)

Gestas: How dark it is when light is shut out. How can we sleep now? This afternoon we start our everlasting sleep in death. I'd like to break these chains, that lock, and Pilate's neck. He has the power to crucify us until our heads sink limp upon our chests.

Dysmas: He has the power to pardon, too. Each Passover he frees a prisoner. Which of us might he release if he'd pardon one? Let's cast the lots to see which one of us three might go free, which rot in this pit, which die on that cursed Roman tree.

Bar Abbas: What hopeless, dying men think up to do on their last day to pass the time away!

Gestas: Weakling, are you strong enough to cast the lots? (They slowly shuffle to the lighted spot on the floor, where the first rays of sunlight shine through the window. Dysmas places three colored stones in the folds of his robe at his bosom and shakes the folds till the stones fall out red, black, and white, respectively.)

(Holds red stone, clasping head)

(Gestas avoids looking at black stone, beating breast)

Dysmas: As I feared: my lot shows that I die. Gestas dwells in darkness in the pit—perhaps a blacker one than this. Bar Abbas, insurrectionist, robber, murderer, goes free.

(Bar Abbas grabs white stone, waves it and tries to jump in chains, presenting an ironic spectacle)

Bar Abbas: Free! I'm freed! I can't believe I'm freed!

Gestas: I never saw a free man dragging chains before! I'd wished for one more chance to get the governor, but he beat me to it. Now he gets to crucify . . . crucify . . . (Echoes "crucify")

Dysmas: I'd hoped for one more chance to start anew before I die . . .

Bar Abbas: I got my wish for one more chance to win! I've much at stake. I must go free. Your deaths will not affect my plan; one weakling and one braggart won't be missed. The lot had to adorn me to go free:

(Arrogantly)

I've seditions to spark . . . What shouts are these? (Shuffles to the window, listening to his name but unable to see out—a pitiable picture. Through the high barred, open window can be heard in the distance angry shouts of "Crucify him! . . . Bar Abbas! Crucify . . . Bar Abbas! Crucify . . . Bar Abbas!")

Bar Abbas: What's that? Crucify Bar Abbas? Crucify me? The lots lied!

Gestas: That sounds good: Crucify Bar Abbas!

Amen! If I die, you should die, too. You're a thousand times worse than I could be. What's that noise? (Jumps, startled)

Bar Abbas: My executioner? (Covers eyes with arm so he will not see nor have to believe)

The centurion opens the creaking door. The men see oppressively thick darkness through the exit, for the night torches have burned out. Only dim, murky light shines through the window shortly before the third hour (9 a.m.) because the sun has begun to hide its face in shame over the events which are occurring.

Bar Abbas: Have you come for me? I heard those howls of savage wolves, thirsting for blood. God pity the man that falls in their clutches and feels their fangs. (Prostrates himself before the centurion)

Longinus: Since when have you begun to pity others?

Bar Abbas: How soon is it to be? Where will I go?

Longinus: Go to Gehenna! That's where your gang belongs.

Gestas: So be it!

Longinus: Silence! Up, Bar Abbas! I'll do the talking. (Bar Abbas, agonizing, arises) Dark things have happened fast in blackest night and from the blackness of men's wicked hearts.

Bar Abbas: Terrible! Terrible!

Longinus: Quiet! Your tardy concern won't help now. Herod sent your king back uncondemned to Pilate. He didn't rebut the priest's charges nor fight back at the soldiers' mocking. He deported himself as — as a very god.

Dysmas: I knew He'd respond as a son of His Father, God.

Longinus: They forced the procurator to condemn him and release a notorious brigand, insurgent, and assassin to them. Yes, one of you malefactors — (Three pairs of staring eyes ask which one it is.)

Gestas: Brigand? Assassin? That's me! Many lives have bled these two hands. When did I go free? (Blatantly displaying hands as if blood-spotted)

Dysmas: Though I'm ashamed of them, I must confess to these and other crimes in my past life. But it couldn't be that I go free. The lot said I must die.

Bar Abbas: I know not what to think; the lot said I'd go free. Could it be me? But the echo of the crowd cries, "Crucify." "Barabbas" sounded, too. When do I die?

Longinus: I've toyed with you long enough, Bar Abbas, son of the father, though the rabbi that fathered you I'd hate to meet. I apologize to him, to the boy you were, and the man you might have become, to inform you that the hellish mob cried, "Release Barabbas! Crucify Jeshua!" And pusillanimous Pilate gave in.

Bar Abbas: "Release Barabbas?" Free me?? Free!! Here is my chance to win this time! Revolts . . . Robberies . . . riches . . . a villa in Rome . . .

Gestas: If that criminal's pardoned, I should go free!  
What's for me?

Dysmas: And me?

Longinus: The cross for both of you, together with your king. Come! It's my unpleasant task to see that it is done.

Gestas: I will resist till my last breath! I'll teach your Nazarene, this man of peace, my kind of peace: piece by piece I'll cut them down!

Dysmas: They'll kill the king for offering a kingdom of peace within a revolutionized human heart. I never dreamed He'd teach me how to live—and die—in one short day, my first and last. (Walks toward door with a light step in spite of the chains)

Longinus: Spoken like a citizen of His kingdom! (Approvingly)

Bar Abbas: I'd call it treason! Let me out, Centurion, while he's deciding whether he's living or dying. I am free to finish off anyone who gets in my way.

Gestas: But wait! We risked our very lives for you; The least that you can do is watch with us until our sorry lives are finished here. (His chains clank as he pulls back from the centurion to try to avoid what lies ahead through the darkness of the open door)

Dysmas: Do you forget three crosses have been made for you, and Gestas, and—and one for me? Do you not wish to thank your substitute?

Bar Abbas: I did not sentence him to take my place. Anyway, my plans are not finished. My work waits.

Dysmas: And for us the crosses wait. Have you no heart to feel for one, dying in your place? (Stands tall with a brave look as he walks to door)

Bar Abbas: While he dies, I'll die laughing at this joke on Pilate: They made him release his fiercest enemy so I could complete my sedition against him. Let me out, Centurion! I am free to finish my work!

Centurion: Do not you want to come by to behold the very son of God, dying for you?

Bar Abbas: I really don't have time to go and see. I have what I want—someone to die for me. (Indifferently struts out the door, as the centurion opens it, into the terrible darkness.)







